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Senate approves Sen. Cassis' ID-theft legislation

LANSING – Michigan residents could see some of the strongest protections against identity theft in the nation under legislation making its way to the governor's desk, announced Sen. Nancy Cassis, a package sponsor.

Cassis sponsored Senate Bill 795, which would prohibit individuals, companies, governmental organizations such as schools and universities, or other legal entities from using all or more than four digits of Social Security numbers for public display, for use as a primary account number, or for display on membership and ID cards, unless that person consents or the disclosure is authorized by state or federal law. It also would prohibit those entities from sending anything through the mail on which an individual's Social Security number could be seen from outside the envelope.

"This legislation will help Michigan residents keep their confidential personal information secure by prohibiting the unauthorized disclosure of Social Security numbers," said Cassis, R-Novi. "As we approach the busy holiday season, it is particularly important for residents to be vigilant about protecting their personal information."

The bill is part of a broad effort to stop the explosion of identity theft in Michigan and help victims get their good credit back.

"In passing Michigan's Identity Theft Protection Act, the Michigan Senate has provided a number of specific remedies to deal with the many aspects of identity theft," said Sen. Mike Bishop, also a package sponsor. "Sen. Cassis's bill is landmark legislation that is the most crucial part of the package protecting against the misuse and abuse of a person's Social Security number."

"With the growth of identity theft in Michigan and across the country, it is vital we do all we can to protect our residents from this potentially devastating crime," Cassis said. "I am proud of the effort the Legislature has put forth in passing this legislation, and I urge the governor to enact it as soon as possible."

According to a recent Michigan State University study, 70 percent of identity thefts happen inside the workplace. Therefore, Senator Cassis' bill requires employees to acknowledge and abide by a privacy/confidentiality policy.

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